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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON SADDAM'S TRIAL

Summary

-- Lead story in all papers today, July 7, highlights King Abdullah's renewal of confidence in the government of Prime Minister Faisal Al-Fayez. Major front-page reporting continues to focus on developments in the West Bank and in Iraq.

Editorial Commentary

-- "Where justice is served"

Centrist, influential among the elite English daily Jordan Times (07/07) editorializes: "The trial, in the Hague, of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic before the war crimes tribunal . appears to be open-ended after dragging on for two years. The latest round of delay is attributed to Milosevic's ill health. Yet, even before this former leader fell ill, the international legal process was too slow and too lenient in passing sentences.. This casts a dark shadow on international justice and makes one wonder whether it was worth it to establish the International Criminal Court (ICC) and rely on it to administer justice. It would seem that reliance on national court systems serves justice better; most probably, these courts pass judgments at a faster pace and apply sentences that are commensurate with the gravity of the crimes committed. The Sierra Leone war crimes tribunal could serve as a better model than its counterparts in the Hague or the U.N.-created tribunal on war crimes committed in Rwanda. Unlike the ICC, the Arusha tribunal for Rwanda or the war crimes tribunal for crimes committed in former Yugoslavia, the Sierra Leone tribunal is situated right where the crimes were committed. This makes the trials easier, cheaper and more effective. This gives reason to believe that the trial of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his high-ranking aides can be better conducted, with evidence, provided that the basic norms on a fair trial are observed. What makes any trial fair and renders justice is strict compliance with international standards on the administration of criminal justice."

GNEHM